AKIRA 38™

EPIC COMICS® $6.95 • $9.75 CAN • VOL 1, NO 38



KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Published monthly by EPIC COMICS®
in collaboration with
Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo
Office of Publication:
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

AKIRA™ Vol 1, No. 38
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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 38

THE FINAL CHAPTER

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

2030. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. **Kaneda,** onetime leader of a delinquent gang, is caught up in the aftermath of a power struggle between a Japanese military research organization – led by a man known only as the **Colonel** – and a resistance group whose members included **Kay, Ryu,** and a formidable woman named **Chiyoko.**

The Colonel had a number of psychic children under his control. Each one was identified by a number tattooed on the hand. Among them were **Kiyoko** and **Masaru** – Numbers 25 and 27. The blind **Lady Miyako** – Number 19 – now heads a great religious cult. Number 41 is **Tetsuo,** who lost his left arm to a laser blast from the Colonel's military satellite SOL, and has used cybernetics and telekinesis to fabricate a prosthetic replacement. **Tetsuo** was Kaneda's dearest friend until he used his burgeoning powers to slaughter other members of their gang. Now, **Kaneda** is out for revenge.

Most powerful of all the children is Number 28 – **Akira.** Almost forty years ago he started the Third World War with a mental blast. He has since been in a cryogenic sleep. **Akira** was recently reawakened by **Tetsuo,** and again he devastated the reconstructed city of Neo-Tokyo. Japan now exists in a state of emergency, with the army and the members of the resistance scattered throughout.

In the western part of Neo-Tokyo, the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed – a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. To the east, **Lady Miyako** welcomes refugees to her shrine. In this, she is aided by **Kiyoko, Masaru,** and a number of loyal psychic monks.

The **Empire** is infiltrated by teams of spies and commando units from the outside world, equipped with biochemical armaments which take a tremendous toll on Tetsuo's forces.

A fleet of foreign ships waits in Tokyo Bay, poised for action. Aboard an American naval vessel, an international conclave of scientists and one Tibetan monk study the **Akira** phenomenon – which they've codenamed **Juvenile A.** One of the scientists – **Stanley Simmons** – goes ashore to implement a secret plan. The research team is certain that using military force against **Akira** and **Tetsuo** can only lead to disaster. When the fleet sends fighter planes against **Tetsuo,** he sinks their flagship, forcing the survivors to flee.

Meanwhile, **Kay** joins Miyako's forces in battle against **Tetsuo,** because **Kay** is a powerful medium, through

whom the others can project their powers and strike as one.

Kaneda teams up with **Kai** and **Joker** – a friend and rival from his gang days. Using salvaged weapons the trio lead a ragtag force to help **Kay** battle **Tetsuo**. As they fight, **Akira** looks placidly on, drawn by the similarity of Tetsuo's powers to his own.

Tetsuo is griefstricken over the death of his gentle girlfriend, **Kaori.** He carries her body to the underground chamber where **Akira** once slept. **Akira** follows and is joined by **Kaneda, Joker, Chiyoko** and **Ryu.** They prepare to fight in the bowels of the earth, where many of their comrades died.

Tetsuo's powers have grown erratic. His body frequently bloats and expands, engulfing those who venture too close. For a moment, it seems that contact with **Kaneda** has restored Tetsuo's humanity. Then, Tetsuo's power comes surging back and **Kaneda** is drawn into his monstrous form, apparently consumed. As the battle rages, **Akira** becomes more alert. Terrified at what might occur if **Akira** awakens fully, **Ryu** panics. He draws a gun and shoots **Akira,** setting the boy's power free.

Seeking a new power source for himself, **Tetsuo** flies to Lady Miyako's shrine. **Kay** follows in hot pursuit. **Lady Miyako** instructs **Kiyoko** and **Masaru** to look after **Akira,** and the pair teleport away to help their friend. **Lady Miyako,** her followers, and **Kay** prepare to make a final stand against **Tetsuo.**

Kiyoko and **Masaru** meet **Akira** on the psychic plane. They are joined by the spirits of all the gifted children who have died before.

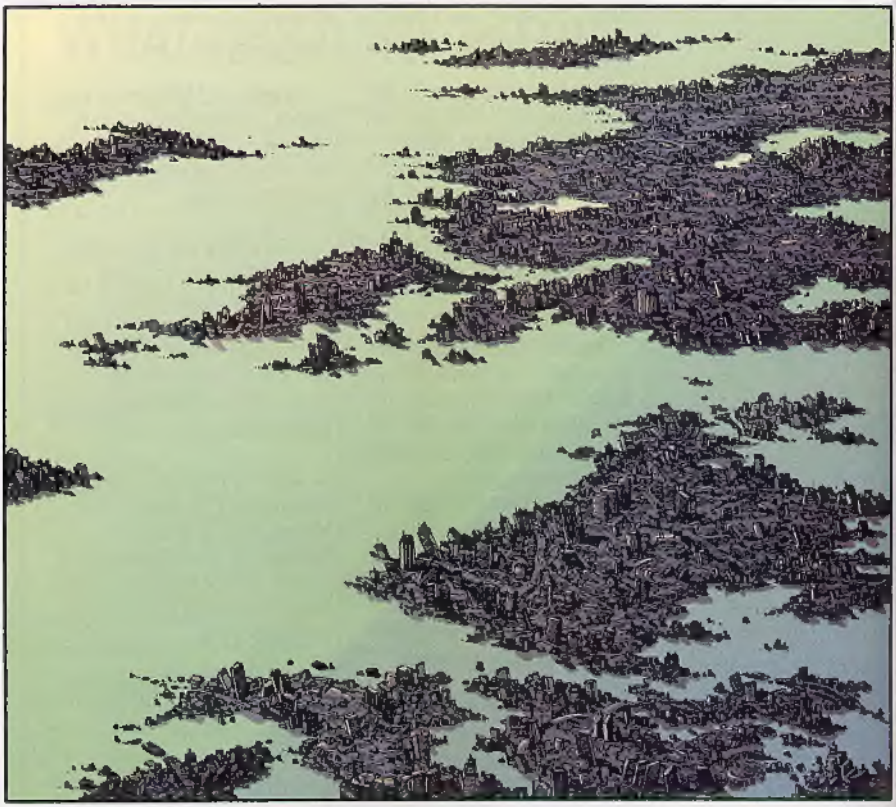
Telling **Kay** that the resolution depends on her, **Lady Miyako** heroically draws **Tetsuo** to herself and is killed. As she dies, she, too, is drawn to the spirit plane, where the souls of friends who have gone before await.

Kay is guided in battle by her late mentor's commands, and is able to break through to **Tetsuo.** His concentration interrupted, he is vulnerable, and is himself consumed by the force of Akira's mind.

Trapped within Tetsuo's soul, **Kaneda** experiences a fractured, kaleidoscopic journey through his late friend's life and hardships. He shares with **Tetsuo** both the good memories and the bad.

Kaneda is contacted by Lady Miyako's spirit, and is stunned by what she tells him. Although **Tetsuo** and **Akira** were created in laboratories, they, along with all the catastrophe they bring, are a vital part of mankind's evolution. All this madness has been part of a greater cosmic good.

As Tetsuo's spirit joins the others on a higher plane, **Kaneda** is guided back to reality, sanity and safety by friends who still need him in the world he left behind.

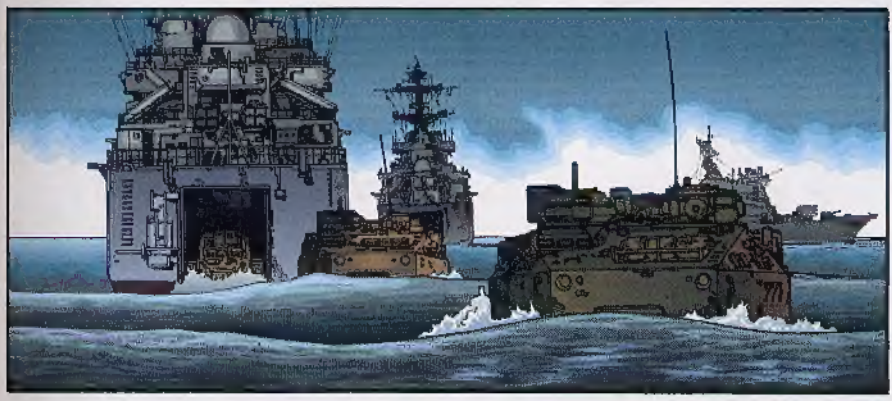



DRRNN

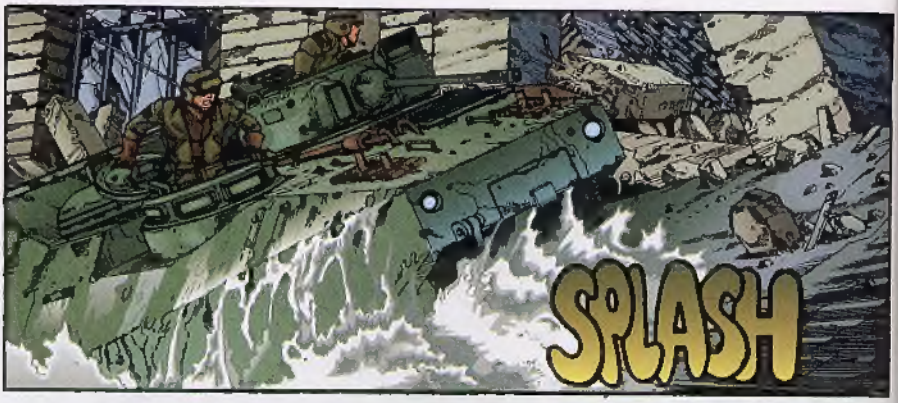

FWUP
FWUP
FWUP
FWUP

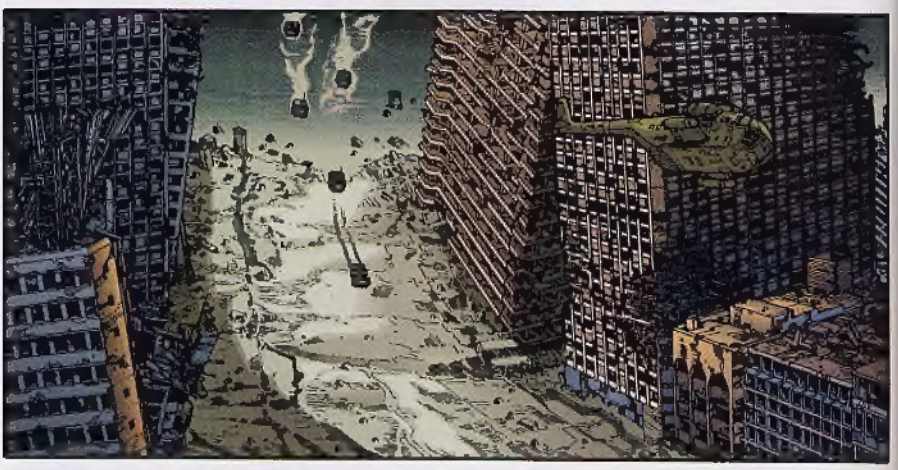


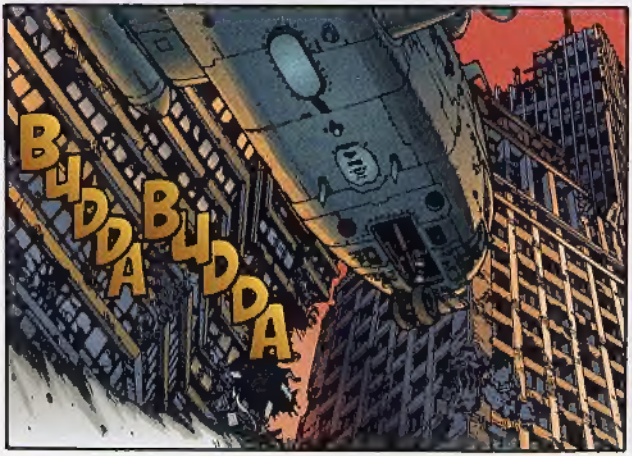

KLANK
KLANK




BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA
BUDDA


SPLASH




BUDDA BUDDA


BUDDA


FWUP
FWUP
FWUP
SO FAR WE HAVEN'T MET WITH ANY RESISTANCE.
ALL WE'VE SEEN ARE REFUGEES ASKING FOR FOOD AND MEDICAL HELP.


WHAT ABOUT THE SCOUTING PARTY?
THEY'RE SCHEDULED TO DEPART AT 1500 HOURS.
GOOD!
FWUP FWUP FWUP


NEXT!
IF YOU'RE HERE FOR FOOD, LINE UP ON THE RIGHT. ANYONE WHO NEEDS A MEDIC, LINE UP ON THE LEFT.
WE NEED AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE ABOUT NEO-TOKYO. IF YOU CAN HELP US, PLEASE CONTACT OUR HEADQUARTERS.


CHOMP CHOMP
...DR SIMMONS.
MIKE!!!


DR. SIMMONS!!
YOU'RE ALIVE! ALL OF YOU!
THE SCOUTING PARTY IS READY TO DEPART!


MOVE OUT!
RRRRN
RRRRRRN


FWOOM
BOOOM
FWOOM


RETREAT!
BWAHOOM
CLATTER


UP THERE !
WHAT'S THAT?!
VRRRRN


VRRRNNNN
VIIII
BASTARD...
WAIT--!
HuNH?
LOOK!
CLANK
CLANK


WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE? I WANNA TALK TO THE BOSS!
DON'T TELL ME MY LITTLE FIGHT SHOW ACTUALLY SCARED YOU SOLDIER BOYS.
STOP TRYING TO PROVOKE US! WE HAVEN'T COME HERE TO FIGHT!
NO? THEN HOW COME ALL THE GUNS AND TANKS AND AMMO?
WE ARE AN OFFICIAL PEACEKEEPING FORCE SENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS TO HELP REFUGEES AND RESTORE ORDER!


BULLSHIT!
PACK UP YOUR WEAPONS--
--AND GET THE HELL OUT OF OUR COUNTRY!
YEAH YOU HEARD THE MAN.
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT?
GET A LOAD OF THIS!
FLUP
GREATAKIBA EMPIRE


GREAT AKIRA EMPIRE
WHAT...?
ARE YOU PEOPLE CRAZY? WE'RE NOT INVADERS! WE WERE SENT BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT!
THE BANNER MAY BE TATTERED BUT WE LL FIGHT FOR WHAT T STANDS FOR


fff+
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
ALL RIGHT! LET'S GO.
HALT!
!
SMEK
FUF
CLATTER

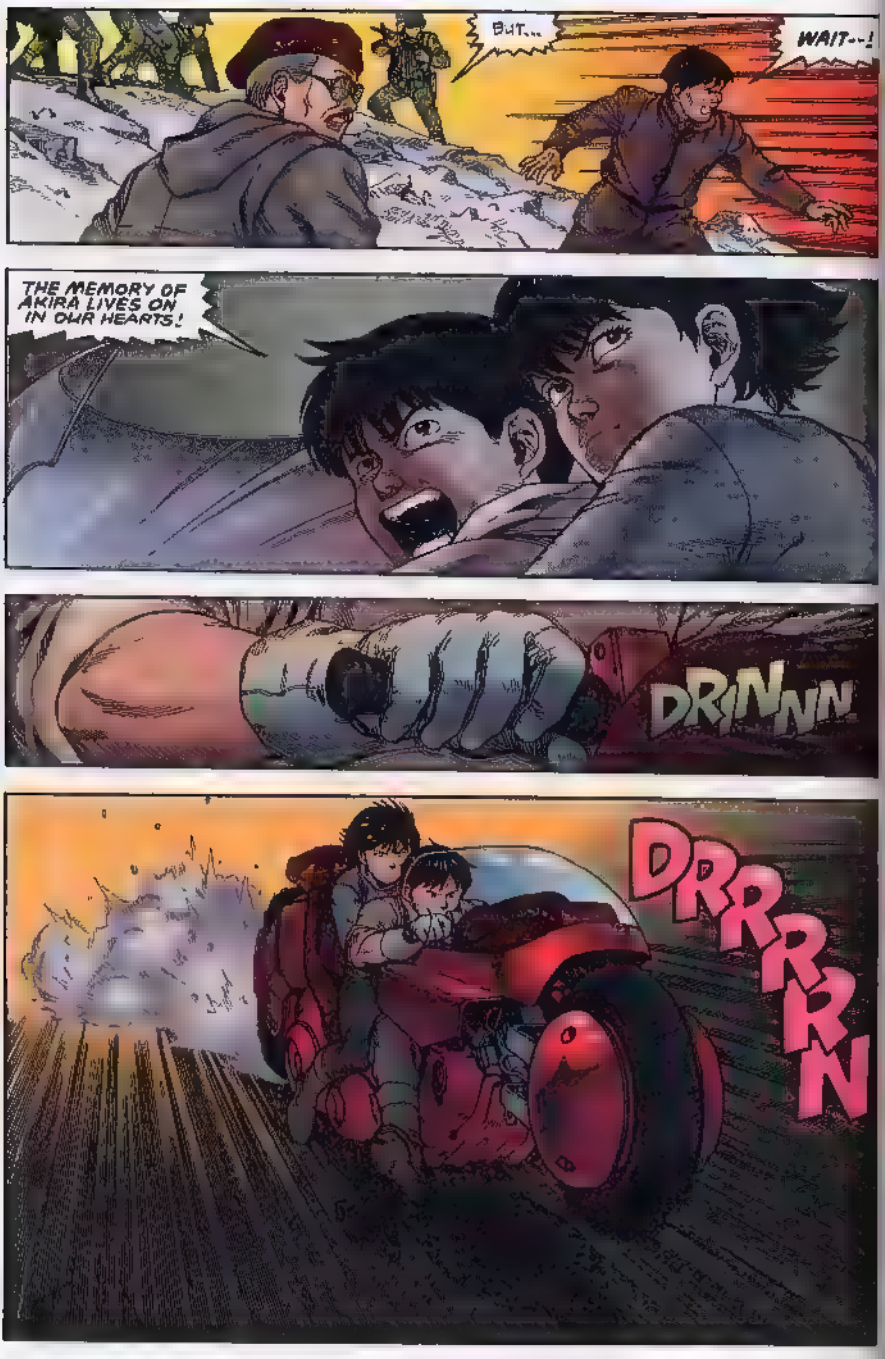

KRUNK
...TWO--!
SLUK
..AND A-ONE..
HMMM
DRRRN
WHAT IN..?
DDRRRRRNN


SO WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR LITTLE WELCOMING COMMITTEE ?
YIPE!
DRRRRNN
DRRRN
AAUUGH
DRRRN


DDRRRRNN
GOOD WORK, KAI!
DRRRNN
DRRRRNNNN
DDRRRRNNN


DRRRN
DRRRN
WE'LL KEEP THE FOOD,,,
...AND ALL OF YOUR MEDICAL SUPPLIES.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THAT YOU'RE LEAVING. NOW!

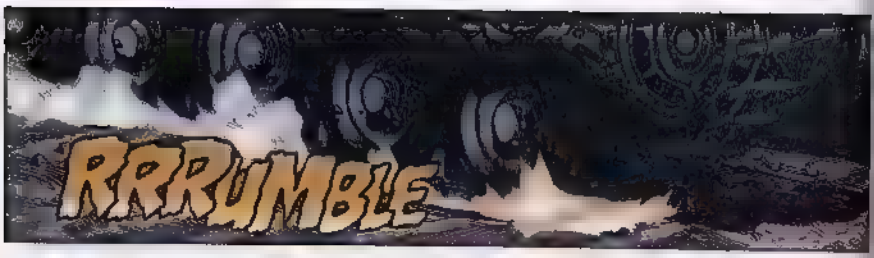

THIS IS A SOVEREIGN NATION. IF YOU COME AGAIN WITHOUT AN INVITATION, WE'RE GONNA TREAT YOU AS INVADERS.
SLUK
SLUK
HUNH ..?
FALL BACK.
DRRRRRRRRRRRRRN

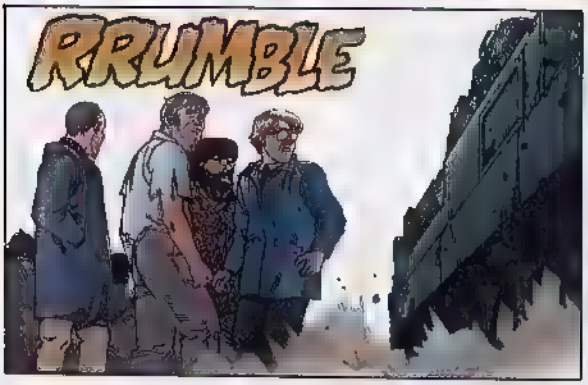

But...
WAIT--!
THE MEMORY OF AKIRA LIVES ON IN OUR HEARTS!
DRINNN
DRRRRRN


GREAT AKIRA EMPIRE
?!


SKRRREE
YOU'RE VERY SURE OF YOURSELVES, AREN'T YOU? AND YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN BEAT THEM?
NO, THANK YOU. THIS IS ONE LAME OLD WAR HORSE WHO'S PUT HIMSELF OUT TO PASTURE
WHY NOT? WANT TO ENLIST?


THEN WE'LL BE OFF
COLONEL...
THANK YOU. FOR EVERY-TH NG
YOU, TOO. TAKE CARE OF YOUR-SELVES.
DRRRNN


RRRUMBLE


RRUMBLE


A

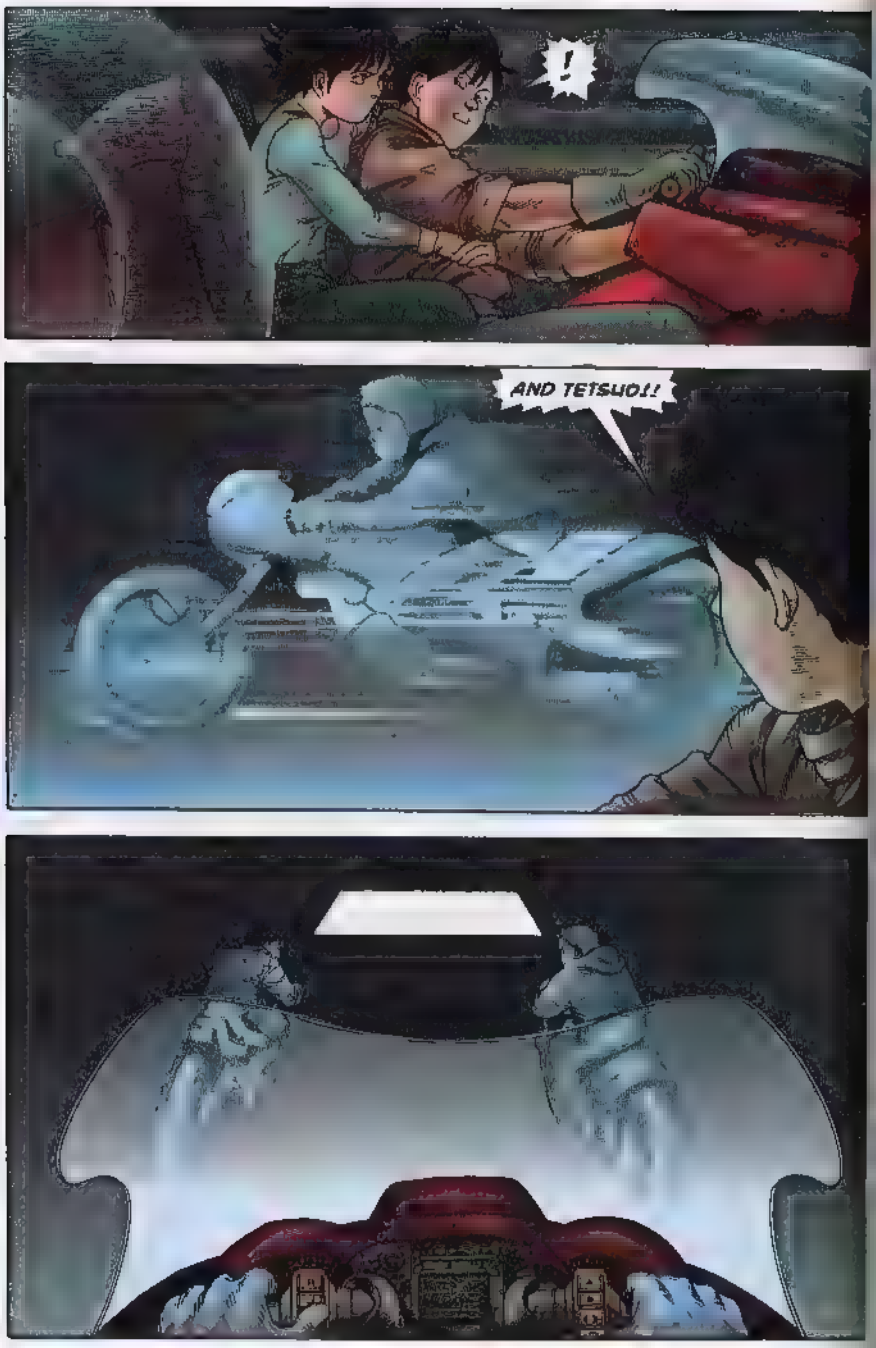

AROUND HERE THERE'S A LEGEND THAT AK RA NEVER DIED.



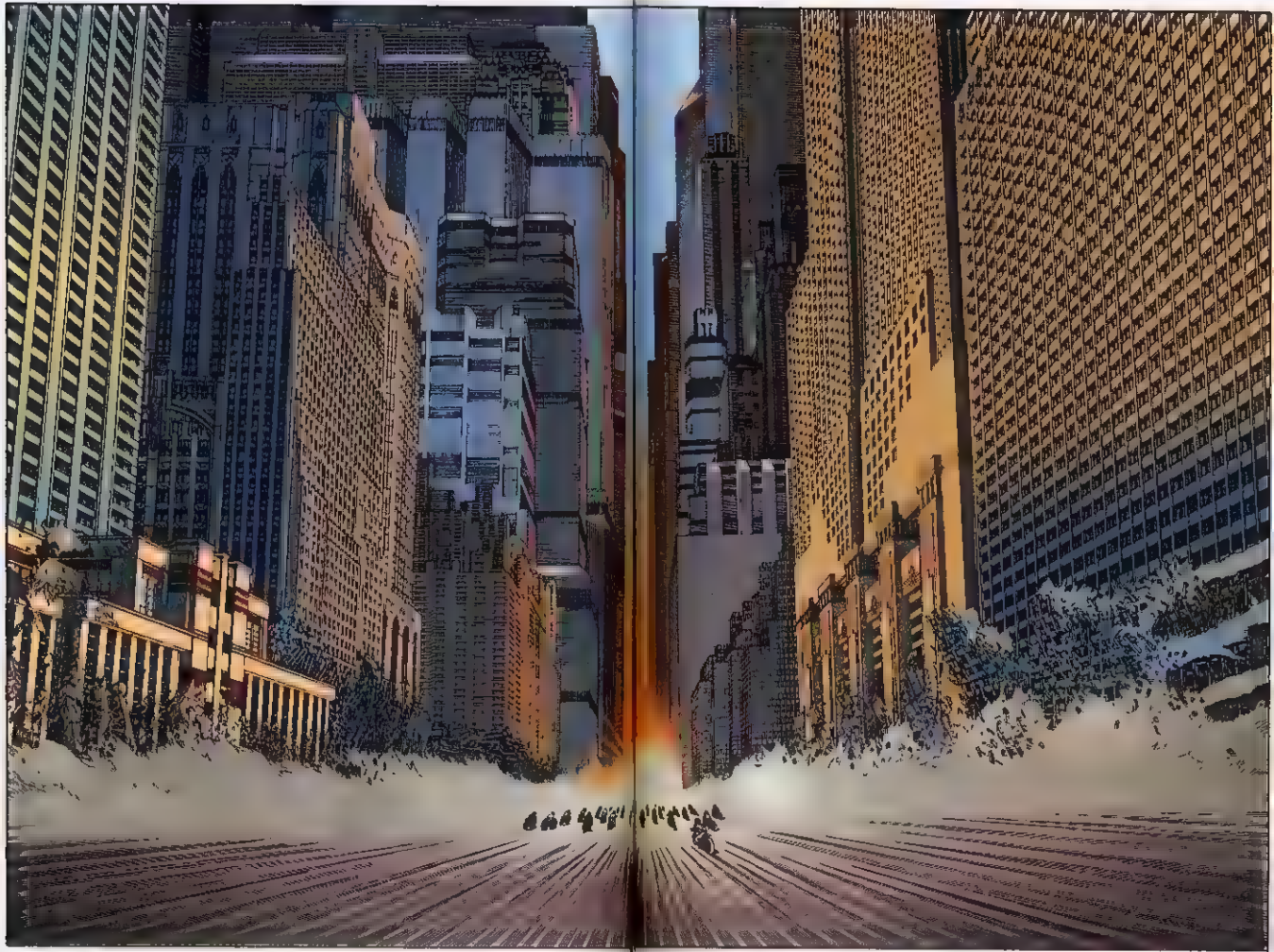

DRRRRRN
DRRRRN
LET'S GO!!!


DRRRNNNN
DRRNNNN


DRRRRRN
!
YAMAGATA...?


!
AND TETSUO!!







AKIRA

THE END



AKIRA
TRIBUTES

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MIKE ALLRED, JOHN ROMITA

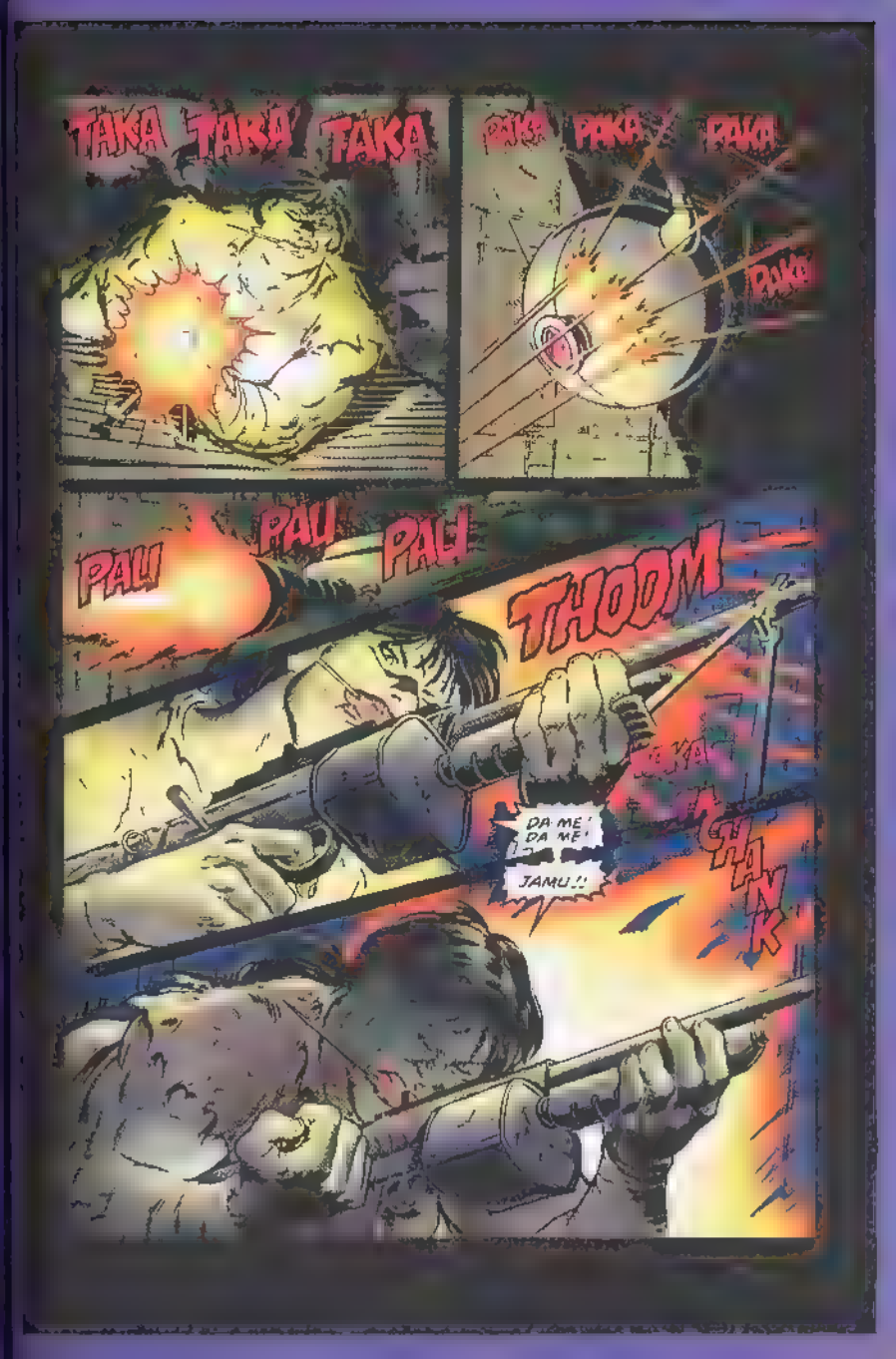
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JOHN VAN FLEET


YAKITORI
K-OTICS
AND THE PIRATES
TADAKIMASU
LARRY HAMA
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BRET BLEVINS
ART
STEVE BUCCELATO
COLORS


Ping
ZZZZZ
Ping

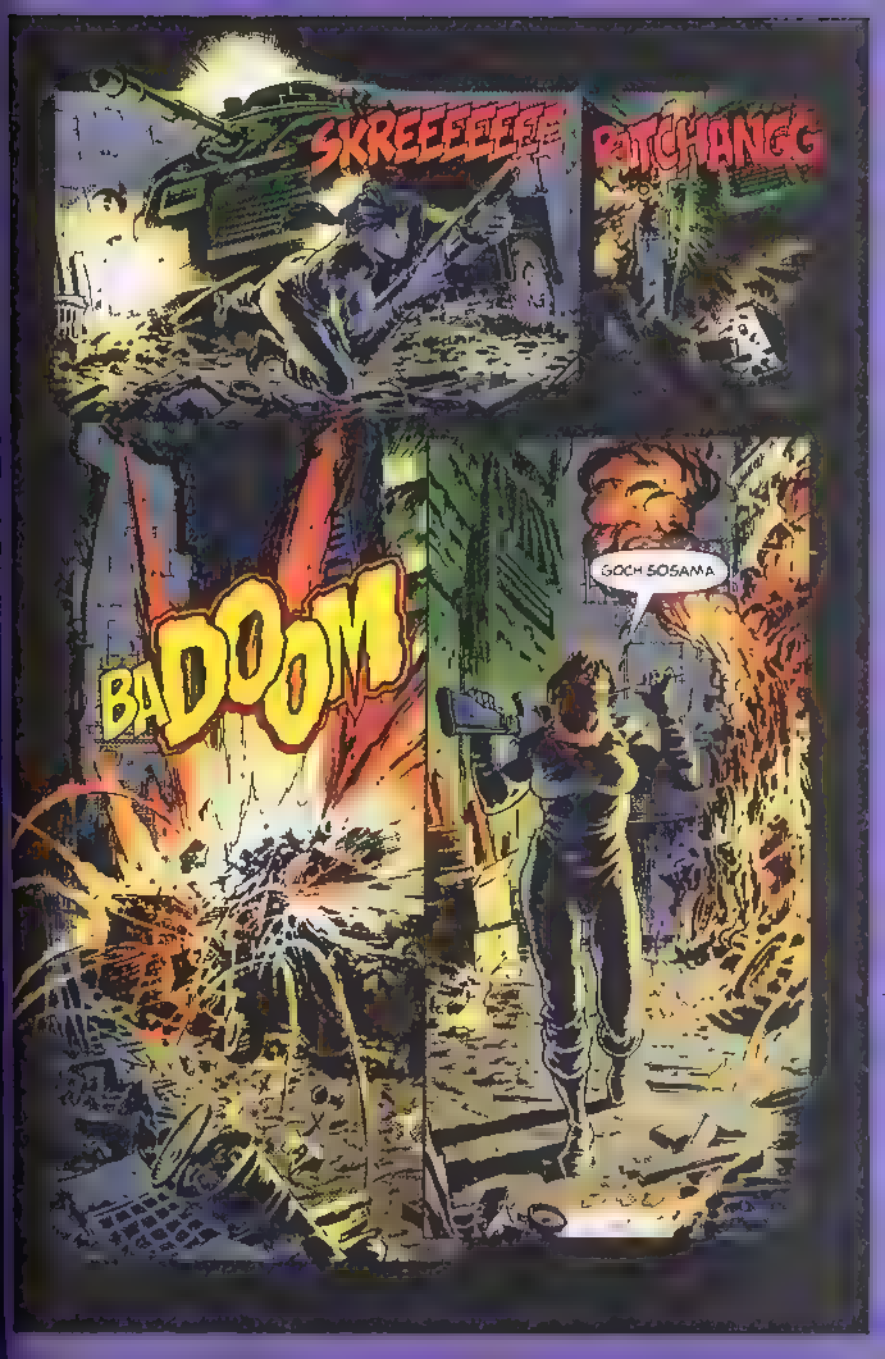

ZZZZZ
Ping
NAN
JONG
JONG
CHIKU-SHAW!!
GAAAA!

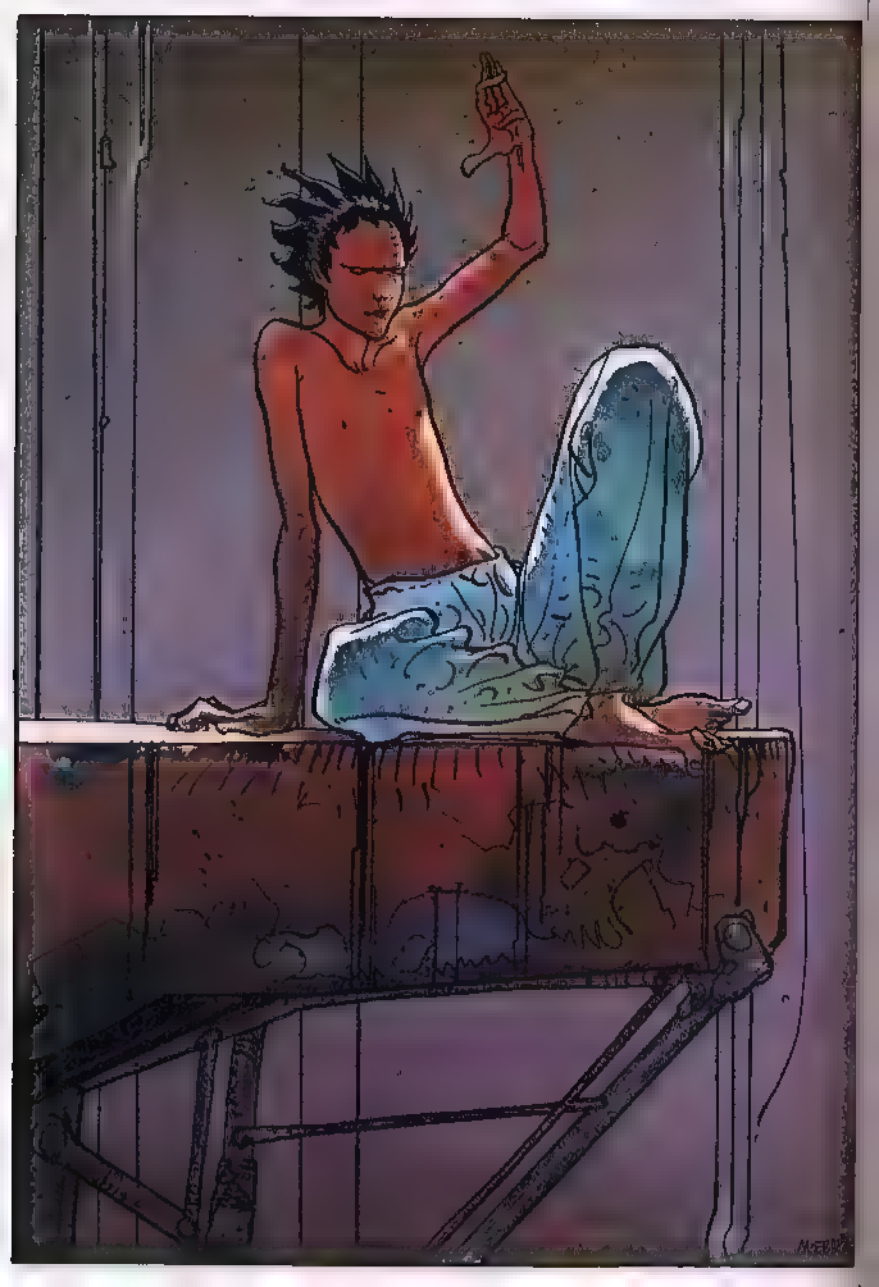

TAKA TAKA TAKA
PAKA PAKA PAKA
PAKA
PALI PAU PALI
THOOM
DA ME! DA ME!
JAMU!!
THK


GATONGGATONG
KACHONG
GUZU
GUZU
PAU
PAU
PAU
PAU


TCHA TCHA TCHA PAGHUNG
BWEEEE
BWEEEE
Ping
GJDNG
GJDNG
JUGU

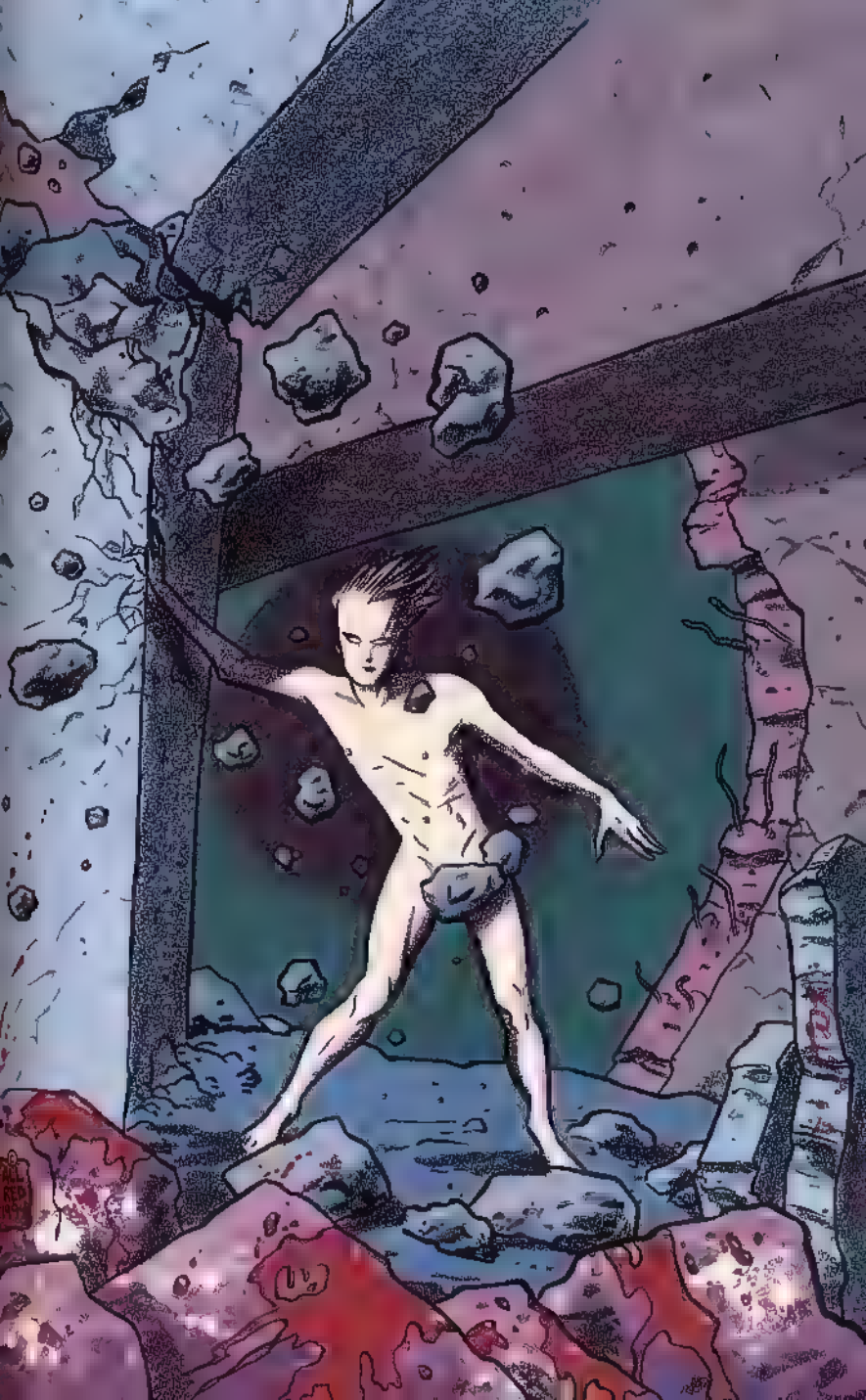

Ping
JONG
JONG
TAKA
TAK
BARA
BARA
BARA


SKREEEEEEE
PATCHANGG
BADOOM
GOCH SOSAMA




AKIRA
OTOMO
RULES
MASAMUNE
SHIROW
MADUREIRA
&





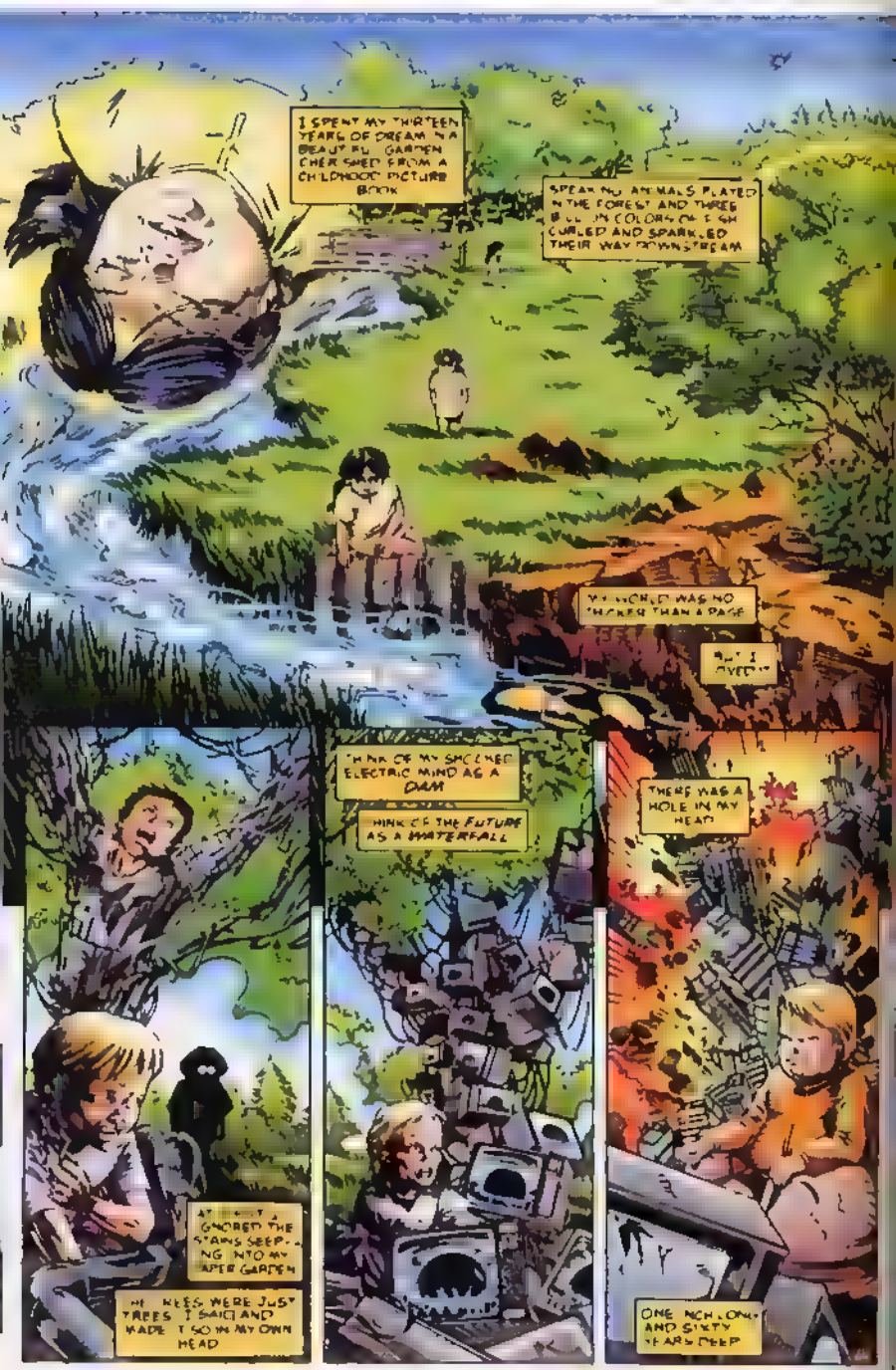




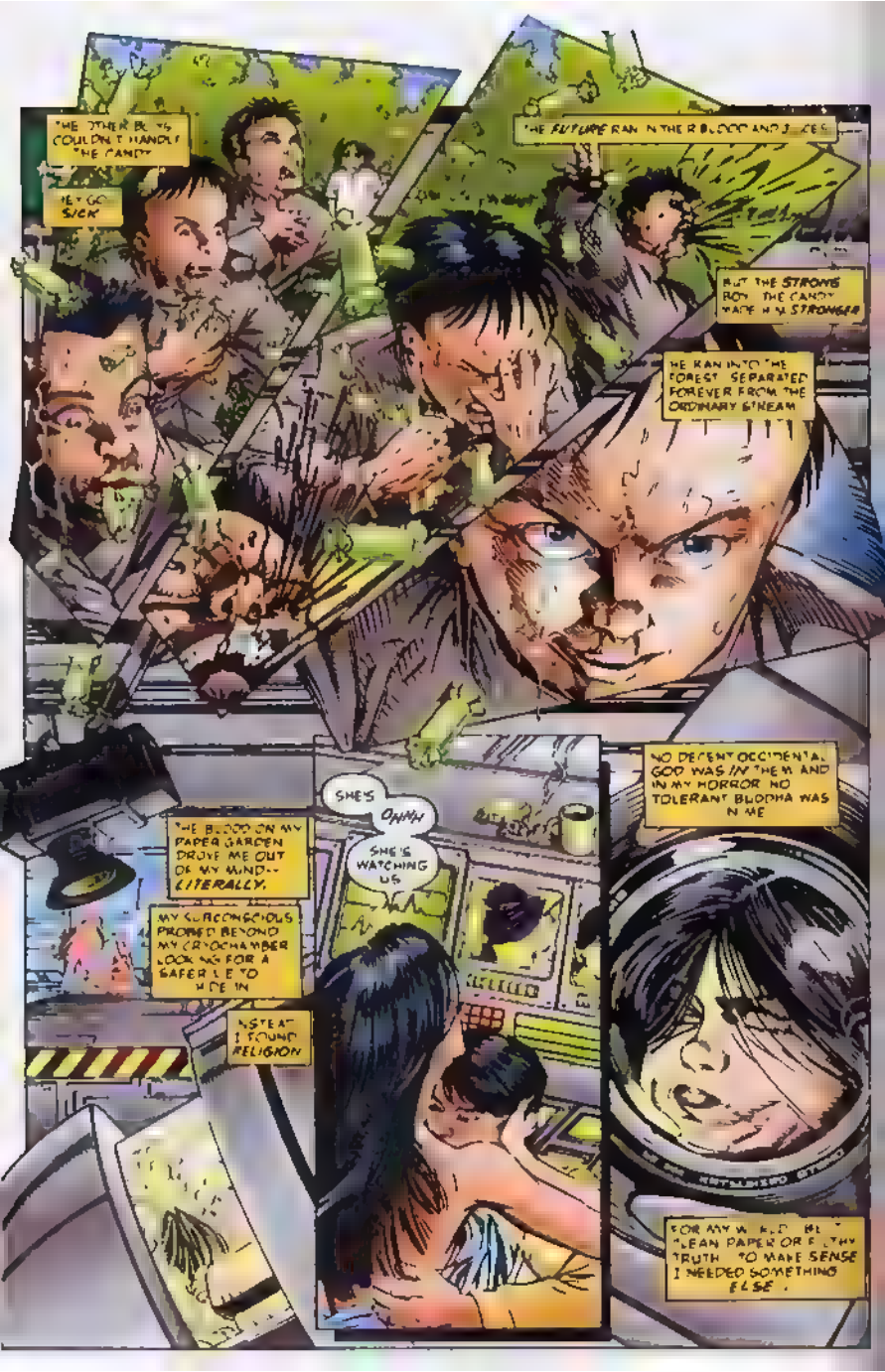

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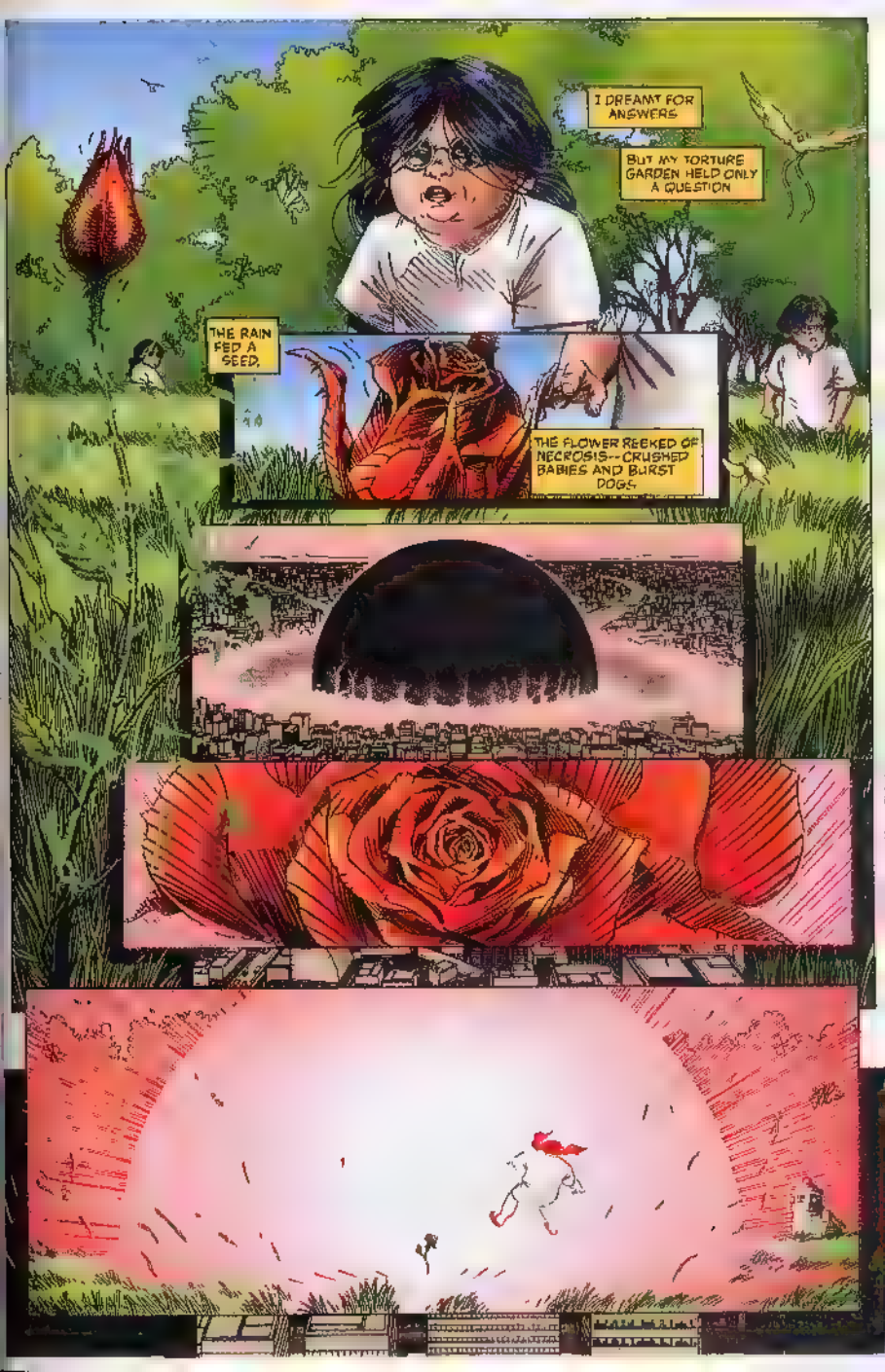


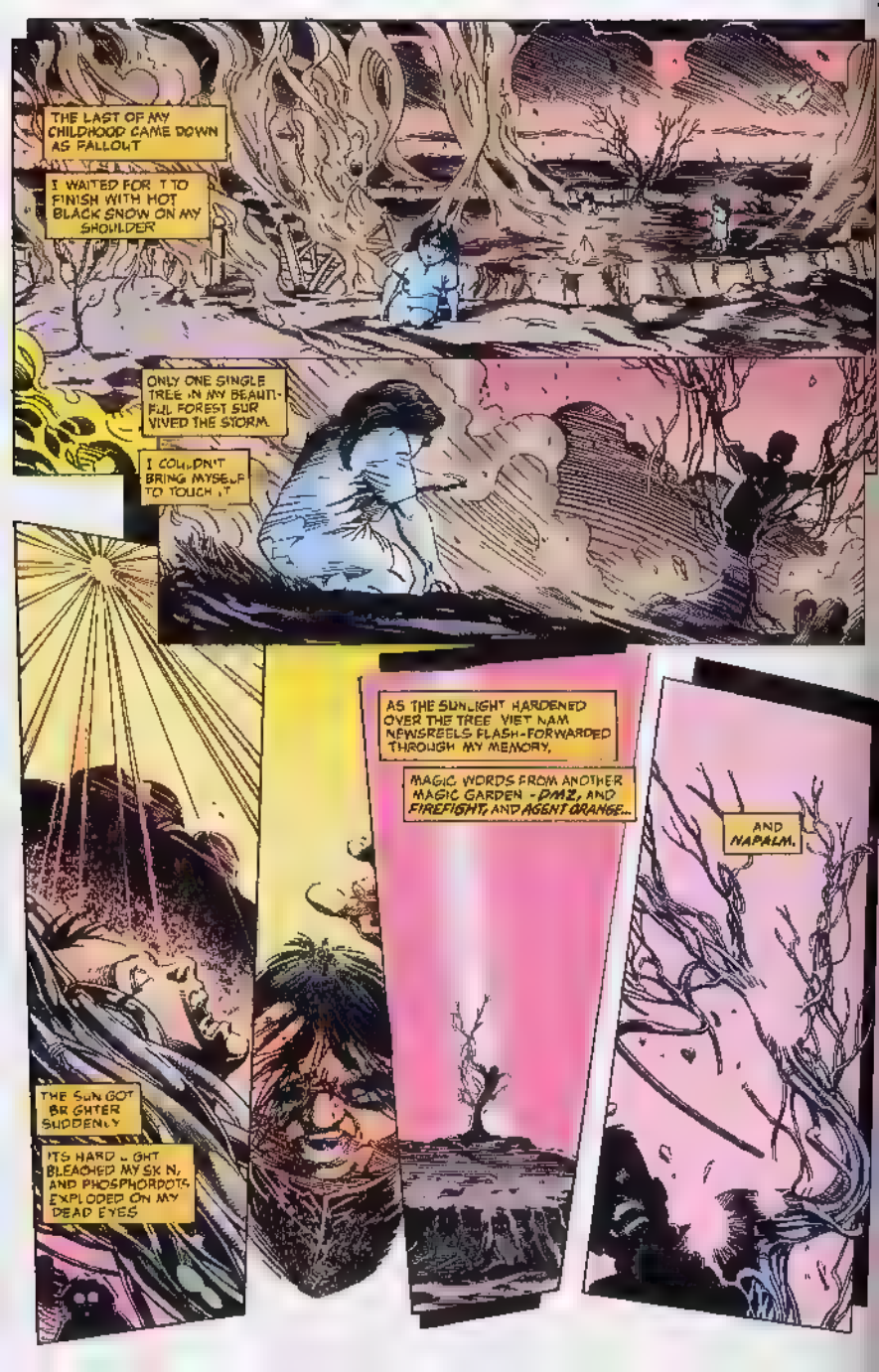

IT WAS COMPOSED OF FRAGMENTARY IMAGES
OF AKIRA, NEO TOKYO...
OF TETSUO THE FUTURE...
Candy Flower
NAPALM
STORY: WARREN ELLIS
ART: TERRY SHOEMAKER
COLOR: BRIAN BUCCELLATO


I SPENT MY THIRTEEN YEARS OF DREAM IN A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN CHERISHED FROM A CHILDHOOD PICTURE BOOK
SPEAR NO ANIMALS PLAYED IN THE FOREST AND THREE BLUE IN COLORFISH CURLED AND SPARKLED THEIR WAY DOWNSTREAM
MY WICKED WAS NO THICKER THAN A PAGE
THINK OF MY SMOOTHED ELECTRIC MIND AS A DAM
THINK OF THE FUTURE AS A WATERFALL
THERE WAS A HOLE IN MY HEAD
AT LAST I IGNORED THE STAINS SEEPING INTO MY PAPER GARDEN
NO TREES WERE JUST TREES I SAID AND MADE IT SO IN MY OWN HEAD
ONE INCH LONG AND SIXTY YEARS DEEP


CANDY RAIN
LIQUID GREEN AND SUFFOCATING WHITE
EASY AS PLEASURE
UNWRAP THE STUFF
BLEEDING
CANDY GRINS ON EASY RACKS AND NICE WHITE SHEETS
NEVER TRUSTED BOYS
HIS EYES LIT UP LIKE
AND DISTENDED


THE OTHER BOYS COULDN'T HANDLE THE CANDY
THEY GO SICK
THE FUTURE RAN IN THEIR BLOOD AND JUICES
BUT THE STRONG BOY THE CANDY MADE HIM STRONGER
HE RAN INTO THE FOREST SEPARATED FOREVER FROM THE ORDINARY STREAM
NO DECENT OCCIDENTAL GOD WAS IN THEM AND IN MY HORROR NO TOLERANT BUDDHA WAS IN ME
SHE'S
OHHH
SHE'S WATCHING US
THE BLOOD ON MY PAPER GARDEN DROVE ME OUT OF MY MIND-- LITERALLY.
MY SUBCONSCIOUS PROBED BEYOND MY CRYOCHAMBER LOOKING FOR A SAFER PLACE TO HIDE IN
INSTEAD I FOUND RELIGION
FOR MY WORLD BEFORE CLEAN PAPER OR EVEN TRUTH TO MAKE SENSE I NEEDED SOMETHING ELSE.


I DREAMT FOR ANSWERS
BUT MY TORTURE GARDEN HELD ONLY A QUESTION
THE RAIN FED A SEED.
THE FLOWER REEKED OF NECROSIS--CRUSHED BABIES AND BURST DOGS.


THE LAST OF MY CHILDHOOD CAME DOWN AS FALLOUT
I WAITED FOR IT TO FINISH WITH HOT BLACK SNOW ON MY SHOULDER
ONLY ONE SINGLE TREE IN MY BEAUTIFUL FOREST SURVIVED THE STORM.
I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO TOUCH IT
AS THE SUNLIGHT HARDENED OVER THE TREE VIET NAM NEWSREELS FLASH-FORWARDED THROUGH MY MEMORY,
MAGIC WORDS FROM ANOTHER MAGIC GARDEN - DMZ, AND FIREFIGHT, AND AGENT ORANGE...
AND NAPALM.
THE SUN GOT BRIGHTER SUDDENLY
IT'S HARD LIGHT BLEACHED MY SKIN, AND PHOSPHORDOTS EXPLODED ON MY DEAD EYES


THEN IT HIT ME.
PRECOGNITION IS NOT LIKE HAVING A DOSSIER ON THE FUTURE DROPPED AT YOUR FEET.
IT REQUIRES STRENGTH AND FAITH. IT MUST BE DECIPHERED.
SO I STOOD IN MY COLD GARDEN AND READ THE FUTURE IN THE MOVEMENT OF BLOOD IN AIR.
CANDY.
FLOWER.
NAPALM.


THE STREAM FLOWS ON BEFORE US.
I WILL TELL A BOY THIS, IN YEARS TO COME.
NAPALM WILL HAVE TAKEN HIS ARM, AND CANDY WILL FLOW IN HIS VEINS.
WE ARE ALL PART OF THE FLOW OF THE SAME GREAT STREAM.
AKIRA IS OUTSIDE THE STREAM.
THE UNIVERSE FLOWS TOWARD THE ULTIMATE CONCLUSION.

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This is where it all comes together — and threatens to tear the planet apart. Ground troops move into the wreckage, bringing supplies to cover the fact that they're here to take the city by force. In a world hammered by change, the military's only desire is a return to the status quo. But the citizens of Neo-Tokyo have tasted the future — and they're not willing to step back without a fight. The war machines have been set loose against a ragtag army of rebels with little more than faith on its side. And the fate of a new empire hangs in the balance. Don't dare miss this thunderous conclusion to the Akira legend!

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA



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